

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:)
Isabelle POQUET *et al.*)
Application No.:) Group Art Unit: Unassigned
(based on PCT/FR99/03270))
Filed: Herewith) Examiner: Unassigned
For: *Gram-Positive Bacteria Deprived of HtrA*)
Protease Activity, and Their Uses)

7/a
1.9-02

Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

Prior to examination on the merits, please make the following changes to this application.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-10.

Please insert the following new claims 11-22.

--11. A method of producing a protein of interest, comprising:
culturing a bacterial strain that expresses the protein, wherein the bacterial strain is a gram positive strain and wherein the bacterial strain does not express a functional HtrA protease.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein the size of the genome of the bacterial strain is equal to or less than 3.2 Mb.

13. A method according to claim 11, wherein the bacterial strain is selected from a group consisting of *Streptococcaceae*, *Lactobacillaceae*, *Bacillaceae* of the *Staphylococcus* genus, *Bacillaceae* of the *Listeria* genus, and *Enterococcaceae* of the *Enterococcus* genus.

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